

INTRODUCTION OF THE LIBRARIAN  
INCENTIVE TO BOOST RECRUIT-  
MENT AND RETENTION IN  
AREAS OF NEED (LIBRARIAN)  
ACT OF 2007

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 17, 2007*

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce bipartisan legislation, the Librarian Incentive to Boost Recruitment and Retention in Areas of Need (LIBRARIAN) Act of 2007, with Representatives VERNON EHLERS (MI-3), RAÚL GRIJALVA (AZ-07), and JOHN SHIMKUS (IL-19). Senators JACK REED (RI) and THAD COCHRAN (MS) will also be introducing a companion measure today in the Senate. The LIBRARIAN Act of 2007, which is endorsed by the American Library Association, will offer much needed help to recruit and retain librarians in schools and public libraries located in low-income areas. We accomplish this by establishing a loan forgiveness program for college students who obtain a master's degree in library science and latter commit to serve as librarians in disadvantaged communities.

The introduction of the LIBRARIAN Act is timely since today we celebrate National Library Workers Day. Our Nation's public and school libraries and the people who keep them open are national treasures. Every day, these libraries provide an invaluable public good to our communities. Together they offer crucial access to education, skills training and unique information. These services are particularly important in low-income communities where resources are often scarce.

Unfortunately, libraries are losing their most valuable asset: librarians. According to a 2002 School Library Journal survey, 30 states and the District of Columbia reported either a severe or extremely severe librarian shortage. The librarian shortage is attributed to two principal factors. First, an alarming number of librarians have reached the age of retirement and the number is expected to increase dramatically in the next decade. The American Library Association, the oldest and largest library association in the world, projects that between 60 to 65 percent of currently practicing librarians will retire by the year 2020. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that more than three out of five librarians are aged 45 years or older—many of these librarians will become eligible to retire in the next 10 years.

The second factor causing the librarian shortage is that libraries are now in direct competition with highly salaried private sectors needing workers with librarian skills such as those in multimedia technology, database administration and systems analysis. Today it is not uncommon to encounter a librarian earning less than \$29,000 annually, despite the fact that the position is highly specialized and requires a master's degree in library science. Not surprisingly, librarians are increasingly leaving their profession and using their invaluable education and experience in other more lucrative employment arenas.

Sadly, low-income community libraries will suffer most from the coming librarian shortage. While well-funded suburban libraries can afford to recruit and retain librarians, low-income

area libraries lack the resources to attract well qualified staff. Moreover, most librarians look to relocate to highly desirable areas creating an even greater difficulty for low-income area libraries to attract qualified candidates to fill job openings.

Earlier this year, I received first-hand confirmation that if the LIBRARIAN Act passed we could attract more students to the profession. A young student in my district who had learned about the LIBRARIAN Act wrote to me stating that she would now consider a career as a librarian and gladly work in a low-income community. Previously, this student had not entertained the idea of becoming a librarian.

There is strong precedent in law for canceling student loans under the Federal Perkins Loan program. Several categories of professionals who service low-income areas currently receive such a benefit. Teachers working in special education, Head Start and educationally disadvantaged schools under the Title I Program, special education and Head Start, as well as members of the armed services, law enforcement officers, Peace Corps volunteers, medical technicians and nurses can qualify for forgiveness of their Federal Perkins student loans.

Specifically, the LIBRARIAN Act allows Federal Perkins loan cancellation for full-time librarians with a master's degree in library sciences who are employed in: a public library that serves a geographic area that contains one or more schools eligible for educationally disadvantaged school funding under Title I; or an elementary or secondary school library that is eligible for educationally disadvantaged school funding under Title I.

Librarians working full-time in these areas would qualify for up to 100 percent Federal Perkins loan forgiveness depending on their years of service as a librarian in the disadvantaged schools or public libraries. Specifically, they would qualify for: 15 percent loan forgiveness for each of the first and second years of such service; 20 percent loan forgiveness for each of the third and fourth years of such service; and 30 percent loan forgiveness for the fifth year of such service.

Since loan forgiveness would apply to the years of services that are completed after the enactment of this Act, students entering a library sciences program and librarians with outstanding Federal Perkins loans stand to benefit. In the end, the susceptible communities that are detrimentally affected by a librarian shortage stand to benefit the most from this bill.

Madam Speaker, it is time to take steps towards alleviating this shortage of librarians in America. The loan forgiveness provisions of the LIBRARIAN Act will be a valuable tool in attracting some of our brightest and best students to become tomorrow's educators in the communities where they are most needed. I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting the passage of this important legislation.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ERNEST  
GALLO

SPEECH OF

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 16, 2007*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, this week the House voted to honor Mr. Ernest Gallo, a pio-

neer and innovator in winemaking and exceptional example of the American entrepreneurial spirit. Born on March 18, 1909 near Modesto, California, Ernest Gallo grew up working with his brother, Julio, in a vineyard owned by their immigrant father. With less than \$6,000 and a pamphlet from the Modesto Public Library, the brothers founded E & J Gallo Winery in 1933. From these humble beginnings, Ernest and his brother built a wine empire, bringing a love of wine to the U.S. customer and permanently establishing California as the epicenter of America's wine industry. Today, E & J Gallo Winery produces approximately 900 million bottles annually, selling them under 40 different labels and distributing to 90 different countries. Throughout the years, Gallo received honors for his achievements in winemaking by a host of organizations ranging from the American Society of Enologists Merit Award for outstanding leadership in the wine industry to the Gold Vine Award from the Brotherhood of the Knights of the Vine wine fraternity and the 1983 Distinguished Service Award from The Wine Spectator. In recent years, Gallo Winery has continued this trend of excellence, being named Winery of the Year in 1996 and 1998 by the San Francisco International Wine Competition and being named "Wine of the Century" at the Los Angeles County Fair wine competition. These honors are owed in no small part to the passion and innovation of Ernest Gallo. In his passing, we have lost an American legend and a dear friend.

TRIBUTE TO SHAWNEE MISSION  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH

**HON. DENNIS MOORE**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 17, 2007*

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church has been an important presence in the City of Overland Park and Johnson County, Kansas, since 1967.

In 1970 the Church, sited on historical grounds that date to the 1871 Breyfogle Farm, the 1913 Mathey Farm, and the 1948 Burgdorfer Farm, purchased the house and barn, vintage 1913, from a previous church congregation. This site will be the location of the Church's 40th anniversary celebration, following its worship service on May 20, 2007.

The Church has provided liberal religious services and education for adults and children, has sponsored forums with knowledgeable speakers on public issues, has initiated a pathfinding Coming of Age program for youth in the denomination, and has presented a nationally-recognized World Religion Series. Additionally, the Church has promoted democracy by serving as a voting site in the community and has encouraged members to support many local, national, and international charitable efforts including SafeHome, Johnson County Interfaith Hospitality Network, Habitat for Humanity, Crosslines, American Indian Center, Million Voices for Darfur, UNICEF, and many others.

Through the years the Church has been a good neighbor to the surrounding residential area through its maintenance of buildings and